

Watertown Main Street Program Façade Improvement Program Overview 2026

Application Fee: \$100 (refundable upon project completion)

**Applications are due no later than
Monday, March 16, 2026 at 5:00PM**

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this program is to offer business and building owners in the Main Street Program area assistance in restoring and enhancing the visual appeal of their façades. The primary goal of this program is to preserve the aesthetics of our historic streetscape. Therefore, façade improvements must further this goal.

Eligibility Requirements

All commercial or mixed-use properties with façades that front Main Street or auxiliary streets in the Main Street Program area are eligible for this program, excluding publicly-owned properties and religious institutions. The façade improvements must be in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation as well as City of Watertown ordinances Chapter 325, Historic Preservation, and Chapter 550, Building Code.

Grant terms

Façade grants may be awarded for one-half the project cost up to \$5,000 depending on funding availability. The Main Street Program has the authority to determine the level of grant funding for each individual project. A primary consideration for funding will be a project's visual impact on the downtown as a whole. Grants for signage may also be available for one-half of the project cost up to \$500. Due to limited grant funds, no additional façade grants will be awarded to the same property within a 24-month period after the grant payment is made. However, an exception may be granted if the property changes ownership. GRANT RECIPIENTS MUST AGREE TO VOLUNTEER FOR A WATERTOWN MAIN STREET PROGRAM PROJECT OR AT AN EVENT WITHIN ONE YEAR OF RECEIVING GRANT FUNDING.

Eligible Expenses - Grants shall only be used for **exterior** repairs and renovations. Eligible expenses include:

- Façade restoration
- Painting (materials & labor)
- Doors and entrance framing
- Fabric awnings
- Lighting (materials & labor)
- Masonry repair, tuckpointing, and cleaning
- Window repair or replacement
- Professional design services

Ineligible Expenses - The following expenses are not eligible for funding under this grant program:

- Roofing or roof repairs
- Tinted windows
- Vinyl awnings
- Internally-illuminated signs
- Security systems
- Paving and installation of concrete steps/ramps
- New building construction
- Land acquisition
- Operating equipment
- Furnishings
- Inventory
- Operating expenses
- **Renovations not approved by the Historic Preservation & Downtown Design Commission**
- **Renovations completed prior to receiving final approval of the grant request.**

Guidelines:

1. Applications received at the Main Street Program office with all necessary supporting documentation are qualified for consideration. Please note: façade grant funding is designed to offset the total cost of a project and will only be paid out when the project is completed. Applicants must be prepared to pay for their projects in full prior to receiving the reimbursement grant.
2. All projects must be approved by the Historic Preservation & Downtown Design Commission. Once a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued, the applicant may obtain a building permit, if needed.
3. **The applicant agrees to commence and complete façade work in the same calendar year that applicant applies for grant. If the project cannot be completed within that time frame, the applicant must apply to the committee for an extension.**
4. Tenant applicants must submit written evidence that the building owner is aware of and approves of the planned project.
5. **Preliminary approval does not guarantee grant funding will be awarded. Final approval rests with the Main Street Program Board of Directors, which will render its decision when all paid receipts are submitted to the Main Street Program Executive Director. The request to release the funds would then be placed on the next meeting agenda of the Main Street Program Board of Directors.**
6. Applicants are encouraged to buy materials locally and to use local contractors/labor.

Façade Improvement Program Grant Application Procedure

1. Applications should be submitted to the Executive Director of the Main Street Program. Completed applications ***must*** include:
 - **Contractor estimate. If the commission feels the project cost is unusually high, applicant may be asked to provide a quote from a second contractor.**
 - **Digital photo(s) of before elevation at time of application.**
 - **If you are a tenant, enclose copy of letter of permission from building owner.**
 - **Plans for façade work including color and materials selection.**
 - **Include a copy of this form, signed and dated.**
 - **\$100 application fee - check made payable to *Watertown Main Street Program***
2. Application for a building permit must be made at the Building Inspection Department, located at City Hall, 106 Jones Street, 2nd floor. Applicants must have a signed Certificate of Appropriateness to receive a building permit. Please contact City of Watertown Building Inspector at 920-262-4060 with any questions.
3. If your project is not approved, the Commission will explain in writing the reasons for rejection and steps necessary to receive approval.
4. Any changes to the approved plan must be submitted in writing and approved by the Commission prior to work being completed. **Should an applicant deviate from the approved plan, the Watertown Main Street Program reserves the right to withdraw grant approval and retain the awarded grant money.**
5. Paid invoices for the final cost of the façade project must be submitted to the Main Street Program Executive Director upon completion of the project.
6. The Historic Preservation Commission will conduct a final inspection upon completion of the project. Final inspection sign-off will be noted on the façade grant application.
7. Grant checks will be issued ONLY AFTER the Watertown Main Street Program Board of Directors approves the payment.
8. Grant monies will be paid to applicant within 30 days of approval. (You will be required to participate in a check passing publicity photo.)

I have read and agree with the above guidelines.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Application forms and supporting documents should be delivered to:

Watertown Main Street Program (WMSP)

Façade Grant Program

519 E. Main Street

Watertown, WI 53094

Phone (920) 342-3623

watertownmainstreet@gmail.com

**Watertown Main Street Program
Façade Improvement Program Grant Application**

1. Business Name: _____
Business Owner: _____
Phone: _____
2. Building Owner: _____
Phone: _____
3. Business Address: _____
4. Description of Project: _____

5. Estimated Cost: \$ _____
6. Proposed Start Date: _____ Proposed Completion Date: _____

The undersigned applicant(s) affirm that the information submitted is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Grant Award and Reimbursement:

Grant funding will be released when the following conditions are met:

- ☐ All work completed follows the approved plan
- ☐ All work has been completed within the agreed timeframe
- ☐ Documentation from applicant project has been paid in full

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Final Inspection (for office use only)

I hereby certify that the project has been completed according to the guidelines set forth by the Historic Preservation and Downtown Design Commission.

_____ Date: _____
Commission Chair or Main Street Program Representative